



LOYAL HEIGHTS PLAYFIELD IMPROVEMENTS **PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM MEETING #3**

Monday, June 22, 2005

Loyal Heights Community Center

MEETING SUMMARY – DRAFT

PAT Members Present: Royal Alley-Barnes Paul Fuesel
Ellen Butzel Peter Goodall
Dennis Cook Nancy Brown Toland
Andrew Westmark

PAT Members Absent:
Patrick Brake, Kelly Bryant, Kelly Jones

Other attendees: Cathy Tuttle, Parks Planner

Meeting Facilitator: Royal Alley-Barnes

Construction Schedule: Construction start: 3rd Quarter 2006

Role of PAT: The overall role of the PAT, as directed by Parks Superintendent Ken Bounds, is to discuss the field's use and design and traffic and parking concerns. The PAT members should report back to their constituent community as the park design progresses.

Previous Meeting Notes: Meeting summary from 6-13-05 was reviewed and is pending approval after PAT members review and comment in more detail. Some PAT members had not received the summary from the 6-13-05 meeting in the mail before the 6-22-05 meeting and therefore needed additional time to review the 6-13-05 summary and comment back before the summary could be approved.

Park Board Public Hearing PAT members discussed the time and location of the Board of Park Commissioners Public Hearing on Loyal Heights Playfield Improvements. The Park Board will hold a public hearing on July 14 and make a recommendation on the project on July 28. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. The Board had not decided whether to meet at 100 Dexter Avenue North or the South Lake Union Armory at the time of the PAT meeting. PAT members will be informed where the meeting is as soon as this decision is made.

Field Use: The focus of the third Loyal PAT meeting was to review and comment on traffic and parking issues. Not all PAT members who represented athletic organizations were able to attend the 6-22-05 PAT meeting. PAT members were sent review copies of the weekly schedule of Genesee Playfield that is scheduled year-round as an example of how fields could be used after synthetic surface was added to Loyal Heights Playfield. Some PAT members did not receive or did not have a chance to review year-round field schedules prior to the 6-22-05 meeting.

Discussion

- The discussion started with clarification of the cost of field use. Youth

are charged a use fee of about \$4 per hour, while adults pay \$40 per hour for the field and an additional \$15 per hour for use of lights. Parks staff said that youth games and practices have priority in scheduling fields and that most adult play is in evenings and during winter months. A PAT member pointed out that the Parks Department would be gaining revenue if this field was used by adult players.

- Parks staff noted that Genesee was a sand-based field that allowed year-round play before it was converted to a synthetic field and that summer play usually was scheduled for youth all-star games. Staff said it was difficult to predict exact times Loyal Heights Playfield would be requested in the future or to make projections about revenue from teams using the field. Staff noted that Ballard Little League has asked that adult softball and youth baseball not be scheduled concurrently.

- PAT community members noted the Genesee field was scheduled for evening soccer games but not as heavily scheduled for Saturday and Sunday games. They also noted youth played through December and then play was almost all for select and adult teams in January and February.

- PAT members asked what the maximum number of hours Loyal Heights Playfield could be scheduled. Parks said the lights at Loyal would turn off at 10 P.M. and that the expectation was that the field would be used in the future much like it is used now with the same schedule of late afternoon through evening play on weekdays and full day play on weekends.

- PAT members wanted to know how much of a shortage of fields there is and how many teams are turned away. Parks staff said that there was a shortage of fields in all neighborhoods in all months for games and practices. PAT members asked how many teams were turned away from Loyal Heights due to no fields being available. Park staff responded that Loyal Heights fields were fully booked for games and little time was available for practices. Teams who historically had used the field were not turned away for games because they had priority in reservations. Park staff encouraged the PAT to engage in a discussion of field use when the field changed to a synthetic surface and again when it had new lights.

- PAT members commented on current field lights being left on after hours. Dennis Cook encouraged PAT members in the neighborhood to call the number provided at the community meetings, 910-0542, and said that it was answered 24/7 to make sure lights were turned off.

- PAT members wanted to know if the community could schedule the field to reserve it for their own use or if the lights could be turned off at a certain time so the field couldn't be used at later hours. Parks said both of these ideas should be discussed.

- PAT members commented that the fields were not scheduled currently for much of the day and that late afternoons were often open even in summer.

Parking and Traffic Analysis:

The Parking and Traffic Analysis of the Loyal Heights complex by CTS Engineers was provided to the PAT for discussion.

Discussion

- PAT community members said the traffic study needed more data. PAT members were queried by Parks staff about the best time to conduct another parking survey. The first traffic count on 4-23-05 had been conducted on a

Saturday morning from 8 to 11 A.M. when both baseball fields had several scheduled games, when the Community Center was in operation, and when local residents would likely be parked at their residences. Parks staff wanted to find an equally busy time to conduct another peak use study. Some PAT members thought a weekday after 5 P.M. would be busiest while others said Saturday afternoon was more congested. Parks staff said they wanted the consultant to conduct another traffic count before the Park Board Hearing on July 14. Park staff said they would find a time when the fields were fully scheduled and conduct another analysis on either a weekday after 5 P.M. or a Saturday afternoon depending on the traffic engineer's availability.

- PAT members said streets were busiest and neighborhood parking was heavily impacted during fall football season. Some PAT members said parking, rather than the synthetic field, was their greatest concern with the project.
- Park staff said Parks gives teams permits to use fields. These permits can be contingent on player civility and behavior (no parking in neighborhood driveways, for example), as well as encouraging carpooling, providing bus information, and other parking behaviors that could alleviate some community parking pressures. Parks plans to provide a map to field users to indicate preferential parking areas, particularly at crowded game times.
- Parks staff said they were working with Seattle Transportation staff to work on traffic mitigation issues around Loyal Heights – striping a no parking area on 20th Ave NW, for example, to allow cars to pass. Staff commented that street alignment adjacent to the Nathan Hale Playfield was reorganized when their synthetic field was installed.
- PAT members thought short term loading areas might be needed as well as pull out zones.
- PAT community members said they had many questions about who to contact while living near a playfield: who to contact when their driveways were blocked, when their windows or windshields were damaged by balls, when dogs were off-leash, when the lights were on. PAT members also want to know how to get the schedule of the field, particularly for those games that would bring a large crowd. Some PAT members suggested a newsletter, others a posting at the Community Center or on the web, others thought a sign posted on the field with contact information and answers to these questions would be valuable. Parks staff will explore possible options.
- A PAT member commented that there were some mistakes in the parking study: five houses and not 15 on 22nd NW had alley parking, and 22nd had a 5'5" landscape strip, not an 11' strip. Parks staff will correct.

Field Design:

- Some PAT community members said they were more interested in the PAT discussing and presenting significant compromises on the design of the field rather than discussing parking, field hours and improvements to the perimeter of the field. Parks staff said the charge of the PAT was to discuss field use as well as parking and traffic concerns. Park staff said the decision to convert the field to a synthetic surface came from the Pro Parks Levy and the JAFDP and that decisions about the field surface were beyond the scope of the PAT.
- A PAT member said that they were told that Ken Bounds had said grass v. artificial turf was not a “done deal” and that this issue was worthy of continued PAT discussion. They also said the JAFDP proposes rather than mandates synthetic turf and that lighting upgrades were also

proposed in the JAFDP. They said that the Pro Parks Levy language also does not mention artificial turf, only field upgrades and improvements.

- PAT members discussed whether removing all or most of the lines from the field would make it more acceptable to the community. A field with temporary painted lines might be perceived as less of an athletic field and perhaps be more welcoming to the community than a permanently lined field. Lines might exclude the community as well as other athletic uses in the future such as lacrosse or Frisbee players.
- Parks staff asked PAT members to refer to the field material proposed for Loyal Heights Playfield as “synthetic” rather than “artificial” or “plastic”. Some PAT members said that as neighbors, lights, parking, and traffic were of greater concern than the field material.
- A PAT member presented another drawing of the field that would allow for more grass and less synthetic. Parks staff said they would take the idea to the landscape architects for review.
- PAT members wanted assurance that the plan was still to provide the Park Commissioners with PAT meeting summaries. Park staff suggested some of the design recommendations discussed at PAT meetings such as new fence locations, walking paths, entries, and field alignment might be presented to the Park Commissioners as a graphic. A PAT member asked if this graphic would include the proposal introduced at the 6-13-05 PAT meeting. Parks staff said the handouts from PAT meetings including the proposals introduced by PAT members at the 6-13-05 and 6-22-05 meetings would be provided to the Board of Park Commissioners. A PAT member asked to vote on the proposals including the one brought to the table by the Parks Department. Parks staff reminded the PAT that their role was to discuss the field’s use and design and traffic and parking concerns rather than to vote on proposals.

[Note: The 6-22-05 PAT meeting was summarized verbally at the 7-14-05 Park Board Hearing while written summaries of PAT meetings 6-1-05 and 6-13-05 (draft) were provided to Park Commissioners. The PAT design recommendations were summarized verbally and not presented to the Park Board as a graphic.]

Handouts:

* Agenda, weekly field use at Genesee Playfield, PAT meeting 6-13-05 meeting summary, Parking and Traffic Analysis, Peter Goodall sketch of Loyal Heights Playfield design option

Summary By:

Cathy Tuttle

Additional Information is Available:

- Park web site: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/loyalheightsplayfield.htm>
- Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks Planner, (206) 684-7033; cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov
- Royal Alley-Barnes, Seattle Parks Operations Manager and Sports field Review Coordinator, (206) 684-4561; royal.alley-barnes@seattle.gov